

U.S. Employers Support H.R. 5515

The New Employee Verification Act

April 1, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

We are writing to express our strong support for the New Employee Verification Act (H.R. 5515). This recently introduced legislation would transform America's outdated, error-prone employment verification system into a state-of-the-art electronic program that will prevent identity theft and ensure a fair, efficient and secure verification process. The New Employee Verification Act is common sense, critical legislation, and we urge you to co-sponsor and support its enactment this year.

A reliable national employment verification system is needed now more than ever. In the absence of Congressional action on immigration reform, states and cities across the country are actively pursuing new laws and regulations of their own. The result is a growing patchwork of conflicting state and local employment verification laws rather than a national policy and process.

Many of these states and some in Congress are advocating mandatory participation by employers in E-Verify, the federal government's employment verification pilot program. Unfortunately, E-Verify is not the solution. The system has a number of shortcomings. Specifically,

- E-Verify, also known as "Basic Pilot," utilizes the Social Security database, which has a 4.1 percent data error rate. If all U.S. employers were to use the system, as many as six million U.S. citizens and legal residents could be denied employment due to bureaucratic error. The error rate for legal foreign-born workers is estimated to be as high as 10 percent – opening the door to increased discrimination based on national origin.
- Because of its reliance on paper-based identity documents, E-Verify is unable to detect fraud and identity theft, leaving employers vulnerable to sanctions through no fault of their own.
- E-Verify was established by Congress as a voluntary pilot program and is ill-equipped to handle a massive influx of users. The Department of Homeland Security recently reported that 52,000 U.S. employers currently use the system – a tiny fraction of approximately six million employers. The program is also due to expire at the end of 2008.

The desire to do something positive to impact illegal immigration is both understandable and laudable; however, it is a mistake to require participation in an employment verification program that has proven to be insufficient in preventing unauthorized workers from obtaining jobs in the United States.

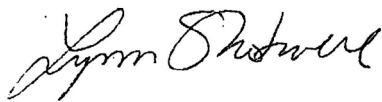
Fortunately, Congress now has a solution. The New Employee Verification Act (H.R. 5515), introduced on February 28, 2008, holds the promise of a new generation of employment

verification. The new program would be entirely electronic and based on the “new hire” system that is already used by 90 percent of U.S. employers.

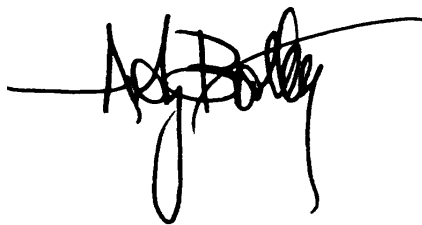
The New Employee Verification Act offers Congress the vehicle necessary to transform the old paper-based method of employment verification into a state-of-the-art electronic verification system. If adequately funded and fairly administered, this new system could eliminate virtually all unauthorized employment – thereby taking away a huge incentive for illegal immigration.

With E-Verify set to expire in 2008, it is time for Congress to create an employment verification system that works. We urge you to co-sponsor the New Employee Verification Act and support its enactment this year.

Sincerely,



Lynn Shotwell
Executive Director
American Council on International
Personnel



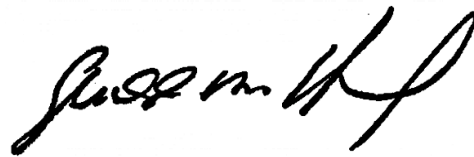
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